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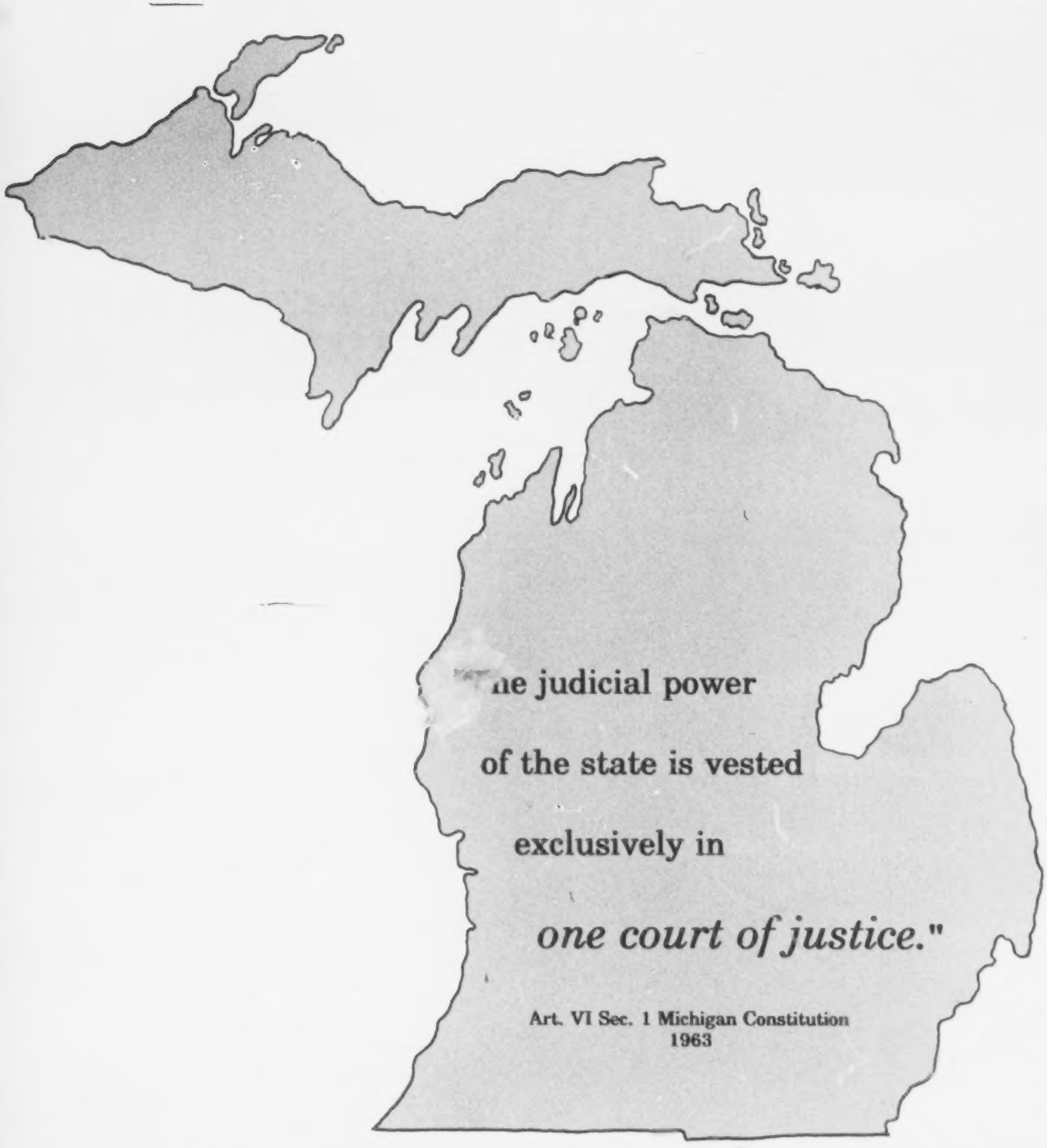



1985 Report of the State Court Administrator Michigan

# State Court Administrative Office

P.O. BOX 30048 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

COURT ADMINISTRATOR
JUDGE V. ROBERT PAYANT
517/373-0130

*To the Honorable Chief Justice and Associate Justices*
*Supreme Court of Michigan*

*In accordance with the provisions of Michigan Court Rule 8.103, I am pleased to present to you and to our citizens this Report concerning the Michigan Court System for calendar year 1985.*

*This year's report contains, in addition to statewide statistical information, a listing of those commissions and committees which have worked toward the improvement of the judicial system during the year. The volunteer efforts of these men and women make a great contribution in developing our manuals, court forms, guidelines and reports.*

*This report would not be possible without the outstanding cooperation of Michigan's Judges, court personnel, and the men and women who staff the State Court Administrative Office and the other related agencies serving the judicial branch.*

*Yours very truly,*

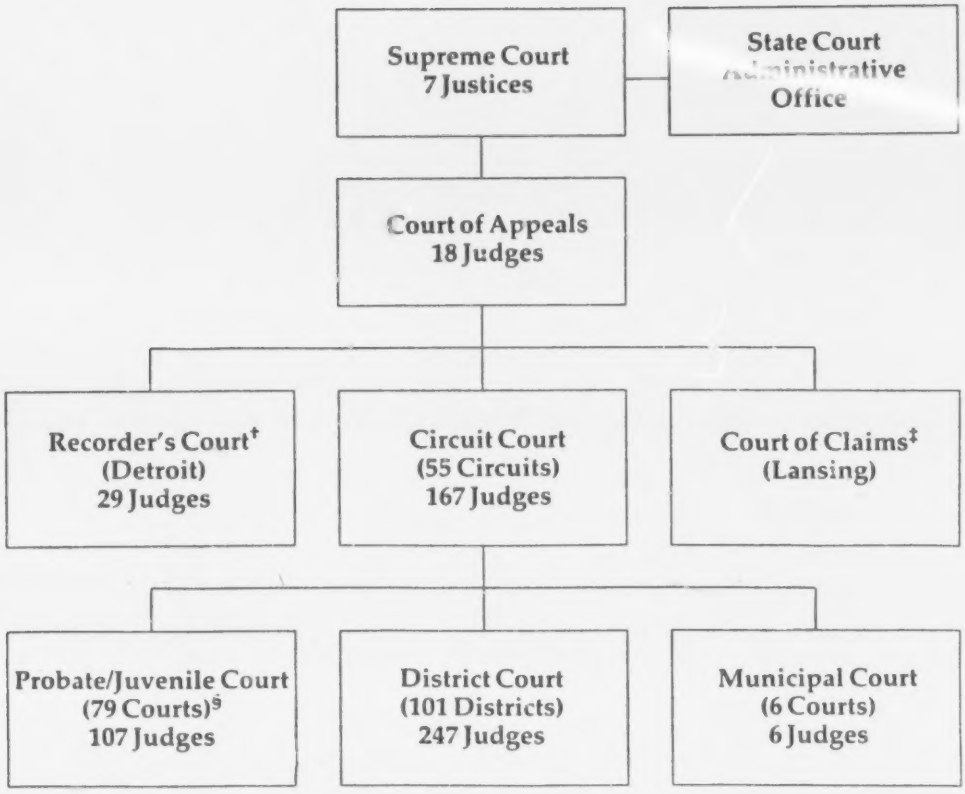
*V. Robert Payant*
*State Court Administrator*

Circuit & District Courts, 373-0131
Probate Courts, 373-9231
Friend of Court Bureau, 373-4835

Assignments, 373-9231
Court Reporting, 373-3727
Forms & Records, 373-0131

Foster Care Review Board, 373-0831
Personnel, 373-9525
Sentencing Guidelines, 373-0382

# Michigan Court System




†Has jurisdiction in felony criminal cases arising within the City of Detroit.
‡Hears claims against the State. This is a function of the Ingham County Circuit Court.
§Certain types of cases may be appealed directly to the Court of Appeals.

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# The Supreme Court

The Constitution of the State of Michigan
Art. VI Judicial Branch

"Sec. 4 The supreme court shall have general superintending control over all courts . . ."

| Location | Judgeships |
|---|---|
| Lansing | 7 |

December, 1985

# SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Williams, G. Mennen
Chief Justice

Boyle, Patricia J.
Associate Justice

Brickley, James H.
Associate Justice

Cavanagh, Michael F.
Associate Justice

Levin, Charles L.
Associate Justice

Riley, Dorothy Comstock
Associate Justice

Ryan, James L.
Associate Justice

State of the Judiciary Message

Presented to the Michigan Legislature

April 10, 1986

by

Chief Justice G. Mennen Williams

Michigan Supreme Court

It is an honor, and I do not use the word honor lightly, to appear before this joint session of the Michigan State Legislature. The Legislature performs a most important, if not the most important, function under the Constitution to make democracy work. Not only is it an important function, but it is a challenging and difficult one that demands the most of a person mentally, physically and spiritually. Therefore, I salute you and I appreciate that much more the honor to appear before you.

In all probability this is the last time I shall have this honor, which I have now enjoyed twenty-four times over almost forty years. Two now in the Legislature served when I was in the Governor's Office, and I have served with the father and grandfather of one of your members. Now, I only wish I could go on to serve further with you and then your children and grandchildren.

Undoubtedly, the principal contribution, and a peculiarly American one, of the United States Constitution of 1787 and the state constitutions that followed was the establishment of a system of government based on a balanced tripartite division of independent legislative, executive and judicial powers. This balanced separation of powers has assured the people of our Nation and our State freedom and a prosperous lifestyle matched by no people on earth in the history of the world. In the long run, the preservation of this balance is fundamental to the successful operation of our form of government and the people's enjoyment of democracy. It is to the maintenance of this balance of independent powers I wish to speak today.

In my previous State of the Judiciary messages, I adverted to the fact that beginning with Governor Sigler in the late 1940's, then Governor Romney and most recently, Governors Milliken and Blanchard, aided by the Executive reorganization set forth in the 1963 Constitution, the Executive branch has become a powerful, well-organized branch of government. In the 1960's the Legislature changed from the no secretary, no private office, no administrative staff body I knew as Governor to a justifiably well-equipped, powerful branch of government.

As a result of modernizing and improving their ability to serve the needs of the people of this State, the Legislature and the Executive are now, for the most part, properly equipped to fully perform their constitutional responsibilities. The Judiciary, however, lags behind and is not fully equipped to perform its constitutional function effectively.

It is not that the Legislature, the Executive and the people have failed to recognize the principle and theory of a proper balance of power between the three independent branches of government. It is that the expressed intentions and first steps have not been followed up with complete implementation. The result is that the Judiciary is not presently equipped to perform fully and adequately its proper functions in our balanced tripartite form of democracy.

This result surely is not in the best interests of the people. Together we should look to improving the situation of the Judiciary and to restoring the proper balance of our tripartite system of government as promptly as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary can. Let me first outline the steps the Judiciary has, and is, taking to modernize itself -- because we believe that in order to deserve your help, the Judiciary must first do all it can do to help itself.

In analyzing what we should, and could do, we were helped by having determined three years ago to visit all the judges of our State, and then the lawyers, in open meetings in various parts of the State, where the judges and lawyers could ask us any questions they wanted to ask and could tell us anything they had on their minds. If you think they tried to zing us now and then, you are right, they did, but all in the spirit of give and take.

These meetings, and citizen and media encounters around the State, opened our minds to problems that most concerned the people with the administration of justice. These meetings also moulded together all the judges into a working and spiritual "One Court of Justice" with high morale.

As a result of our investigation, the Judiciary identified three major challenges facing us today in meeting the need to properly serve the public and restore the balance of power among our three branches of government. First, the public demands the just resolution of both criminal and civil matters in an efficient and timely way. This avoids unreasonable delay and expense for litigants and the general public. Second, the public indicates that the judicial system requires revitalization by responses more fully meeting the demands of people for justice and for a court system more considerate of the people that use it. Third, the people spoke in 1963 for the constitutional concept of a "One Court of Justice", a statewide system of equal justice. This system remains to be fully implemented, and it only can be fully implemented through state financing.

To meet the first challenge of <u>delay</u>, the Judiciary has adopted the goal of improved case processing. The program to achieve the goal of improved case processing is three pronged:

1. Adopt Time Standards
2. Improve Data Systems
3. Implement Caseflow Management Programs

Under the supervision of Justice Dennis W. Archer -- our Justice most recently from the frontline of private practice -- the Case Delay Reduction Project has been implemented by a hard-working committee of judges, attorneys, court administrators, and a county